

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

In this amendment, Applicants have rewritten dependent claim 29 which was indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form, by incorporating its subject matter into its base claim 28. Claim 32 which depends from claim 29, has been amended to correctly depend from claim 28. Accordingly, the claims following entry of this amendment are believed to be in condition for allowance.

The undersigned thanks the Examiner for the thorough prosecution record leading to the allowable claims. However, the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance give the impression that some of the claims are "essentially similar" to each other. For example, although claims 5, 15, and 24 distinguish the prior art, they do not have the exact same language and, thus, are expected to have different scope. For example, claim 15 recites a repeater in means plus function format which, as interpreted under 35 U.S.C. §112, paragraph six, refers to the structure disclosed in the specification as filed (and equivalents), that is necessary to perform the recited functions. The scope of this claim may therefore be expected to be different than claim 1 which recites a method for processing an input sequence of decoded data. Accordingly, each claim is deemed to be neither anticipated or obvious in view of the prior art, because its language as a whole describes a method or apparatus that clearly distinguishes the prior art.

CONCLUSION

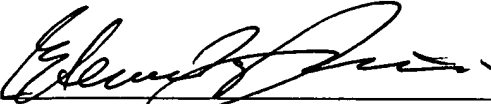
If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No.

02-2666 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17, particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR, & ZAFMAN LLP


Dated: July 13, 2004

By 
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail with sufficient postage in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, Post Office Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 on July 13, 2004.


Margaux Rodriguez July 13, 2004